



Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships



Introduction

Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships is a tool for analysing apprenticeship *systems* and *schemes* in Europe and, possibly, beyond.

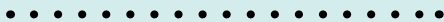
It was originally developed by Cedefop as a methodological tool for the country reviews ⁽¹⁾ on apprenticeships the Agency conducted in nine EU countries between 2014 and 2018, as part of its direct support to Member States. The first version of the analytical framework was further developed taking into account the experiences of participating countries and the conceptual work from Cedefop's cross-nation overview of apprenticeships ⁽²⁾.

Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships is not modelled on a single recommended type of apprenticeship system or scheme – it draws on features that appear to work in more than one apprenticeship system or scheme and summarises key elements they share, to different extents and in different combinations. It also provides a standardised definition of apprenticeship and outlines several areas of

analysis, which are further articulated into operational descriptors.

This framework is not intended as an exhaustive list of necessary conditions or an assessment tool. It works as a frame of reference for: reviewing key elements of existing/evolving systems or schemes; checking what is foreseen in regulations and how this works in practice; and identifying common stakeholder perceptions and ambitions regarding their apprenticeship systems and schemes.

In practice, the analytical framework proved to be a reliable tool during several phases of Cedefop's apprenticeship reviews. Initially used for shaping data collection instruments and processes, and exploring the systems and schemes under review, it ultimately proved useful in identifying country-specific challenges and their causes. Combining different framework areas and descriptors in the course of the analysis helped create a unique picture for each country, which revealed strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship schemes, highlighted areas for improvement and pointed to suggestions for action. Apart from supporting in-depth country reviews, the analytical framework also helped to identify common challenges in setting up, reforming



⁽¹⁾ Country reviews have been carried out by Cedefop in Lithuania, Malta, Croatia, Cyprus, (French-speaking) Belgium, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/apprenticeships-work-based-learning#1

⁽²⁾ www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4166

and implementing apprenticeships in the different national contexts under review. These challenges relate to the following four areas:

- the place of apprenticeship in the education and training system: visions of function and purpose of apprenticeships vary across countries and even among different stakeholders within the same country. This leads to divergent user expectations of apprenticeships and leaves room for competition with other forms of work-based learning or active labour market policies;
- governance mechanisms: the overall prominence of the education sector in managing apprenticeship from design to implementation places greater burden on education actors and limits the potential benefits from engaging employers and social partners;
- training content and learning outcomes: insufficient cooperation between the education and training sector and the world of work in defining, delivering and assessing apprenticeship curricula may lead to either lack of flexibility to accommodate sector needs or, in the absence of reference documents, to excessive, unstructured adaptation to firm-specific needs;
- participation of, and support to, companies: several factors seem

to limit company engagement: lack of communication and, eventually, loss of trust between companies and other key actors; apprenticeship's low status and attractiveness; insufficient non-financial incentives (including information), and lack of evidence of the actual benefits of apprenticeship.

This version of Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships reflects the additional knowledge and insights gained during the Agency's review work. Among several new aspects, the updated framework provides a revised definition of apprenticeships which:

- clarifies the role of employer organisations and trade unions in identifying, expressing and managing the demand for apprenticeship at sector/occupation level and in shaping training content;
- emphasises the involvement of employers/companies in additional activities, such as developing training plans, selecting apprentices, etc.;
- puts apprenticeship in context, exploring its relation and link to other VET programmes;
- highlights the value of qualifications for the labour market;
- draws attention to the need to prepare VET teachers to work with apprentices.

Cedefop's analytical framework for apprenticeships

Building on its overall expertise in apprenticeships and the use of its analytical framework, Cedefop contributed to the development of the European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships ⁽³⁾. Designed on the social partners' initiative, this quality framework was endorsed as a recommendation to Member States by the Council of the EU in 2018. The criteria for framework conditions and for learning and working conditions put forward in this recommendation are in line with the areas and descriptors set out in Cedefop's analytical framework.

The framework consists of 10 areas of analysis, further broken down into operational descriptors.

Distinguishing features

- Education and training underpinned by structured alternation of learning in an education and training setting with learning and working at a workplace, and leading to a recognised qualification
- Duration is long enough to ensure meaningful alternation
- Apprentices have a contract with the employer and receive compensation (wage or allowance) from the employer according to the relevant regulations
- Employers are formally responsible (accreditation, training plan, assessment, etc.) for the learning outcomes set for the workplace

Place in the VET system

- Apprenticeship is defined and regulated by a legal framework
- Position of apprenticeship in relation to other forms of VET, in particular other forms of work-based learning, is clear and education and training and labour market share a common understanding of its purpose and function

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⁽³⁾ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018H0502(01)&from=EN)

- Apprenticeship offers learners access to further specialisation at higher levels
- The certificate indicates it was obtained in apprenticeship and attests that all apprentices benefitted from comparable learning experiences (learning outcomes, duration of apprenticeship learning, length of learning and working at a workplace)
- Apprentices have a clear and formally recognised status among learners and workers

Governance

- Labour market and education and training have formal roles and responsibilities at national, regional and local levels; there are formal cooperation arrangements and explicitly assigned coordination and decision-making roles
- Employer organisations and trade unions identify, express and manage the demand for apprenticeship at sector/occupation level

Offer, content and quality assurance

- Apprenticeship is provided in the sectors that express such demand and in occupations for which such demand is expressed
- Apprenticeship is based on qualification standards and/or occupational profiles

- The duration and organisation of apprenticeship take into account the specificities of the sector and occupation in which it is offered, in particular, the average period for an apprentice to become productive
- Apprenticeship curricula are specifically designed to accommodate structured alternation of learning in an education and training setting, and learning and working at a workplace; alternatively, existing school-based VET curricula are adjusted for the same purpose. The aim is to guarantee comparable learning experiences – leading to the same qualification – irrespective of employer
- If an employer cannot ensure that all required learning outcomes for the workplace part of the curriculum can be achieved, there are arrangements in place to compensate (for example, intercompany training centres, cooperation of employers, etc.)
- A training plan is drafted based on the workplace part of the curriculum
- There are provisions for adjusting part of the curriculum to specific needs (local labour market needs, individual training needs, etc.)
- There are requirements for learners to access apprenticeship
- Representatives of employer organisations and trade unions take part in the final assessment
- Quality assurance procedures/arrangements exist for apprenticeship or take its specificities into account

Cooperation between VET providers and employers

- There is clear and balanced distribution of responsibilities between VET providers and employers
- The VET provider follows the learning progress of the apprentice, including at the workplace, through established feedback mechanisms
- VET providers and employers cooperate to support the apprentice in view of the final assessment

Participation of, and support to, employers

- Rights and obligations of employers providing placements are legally stipulated and well-defined
- There are minimum requirements for employers willing to provide apprenticeship placements
- It is clear who carries out the procedure for accrediting/validating/checking compliance with the relevant regulations
- It is clear who is responsible for registering the contract and any potential amendments
- Employers participate in the selection of apprentices
- There are strategies and initiatives marketing apprenticeship and informing employers of benefits, responsibilities and support available when taking on apprentices
- Employers, especially SMEs, receive non-financial support to participate in apprenticeship provision, before and during their engagement

- Employer organisations and chambers play a key role in engaging and supporting employers
- There is recognition for employers providing quality apprenticeship placements


Requirements and support to teachers and in-company trainers

- Teachers are prepared to work in apprenticeship
- Employers have to assign a qualified staff member (in-company trainer) to train apprentices and/or provide mentoring
- There are stipulated requirements for qualifications and competences (pedagogical/didactic) of in-company trainers
- Training provision is available for in-company trainers to develop and update their pedagogical/didactic and transversal competences and for teachers to update their competences
- Mechanisms are in place for cooperation and exchange between in-company trainers and teachers

Financing and cost-sharing mechanisms

- Employers pay apprentices compensation (wage or allowance) and cover indirect costs (materials, in-company trainers' time)



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- Incentives for employers (subsidies, tax deductions) are targeted to support specific policy objectives (support of SMEs, encourage intake of particular target groups, etc.)
 - Incentives for apprentices are targeted to support participation of (policy priority) groups of individuals (women in certain occupations, adults, etc.)
 - All employers (even those not providing training) participate in the cost of apprenticeship (e.g. training funds, etc.)

Apprentices' working and learning conditions

- Potential apprentices and their parents receive targeted, unbiased and comprehensive information about apprenticeship and opportunities available
- Rights and obligations of apprentices are legally stipulated, both for working and for learning
- Health and safety regulations take into account, as necessary, the specificity of the occupation in which apprenticeship is delivered
- Trade unions are aware of, and actively engaged in, supporting apprentices
- There is a reference point (responsible body or person) informing apprentices of the rights and responsibilities of all parties and supporting them in case of problems

- There are safety nets in case no apprenticeship places are available and alternative options for apprentices to continue their training and obtain a formal qualification if their contract is interrupted
- Apprentices receive support in finding places (through VET providers, chambers, employer organisations, etc.)

Monitoring and evaluation

- Outputs and outcomes of apprenticeships are regularly monitored and evaluated, including transition to work and progress in the labour market
- Costs and benefits of apprenticeship for employers, apprentices and the State are measured, and results are clearly presented and communicated to employers, learners and parents



Definitions

Apprenticeship system:

a set of interrelated structures, rules and procedures underpinned by a legal framework, which regulate apprenticeship provision and make it work as a unitary whole.

Apprenticeship scheme:

a systematic arrangement about how apprenticeship provision should be designed, delivered, assessed, certified and governed within the overall VET system. More than one scheme may exist in an apprenticeship/VET system.



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